

EMMETT UTT

Interviewed by:

Sam Schrager

Oral History Project

Latah County Museum Society

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EMMETT UTT

Princeton; b. 1903

sawyer in Potlatch mill; farmer

1.5 hours

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Emmett Utt

minute

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with Sam Schrager
May 7, 1973

II. Transcript

Emmett Utt has a colorful way with words, and he has some strong convictions. Born near where he lives still, outside of Princeton, Emmett worked for many years with saws in the Potlatch mill. Here he talks of early logging and mining, and some about milling and travel. He tells stories of certain attitudes of Potlatch Forest management that got them into trouble; and he explains our foreign relations by a story about the relations between a coyote and a dog.

EMMETT UTT: Crowds went there to see him like you'd never guess.

There was thousands of people from all over Idaho went to Troy that day just because Burton L. French was going to be there to make a speech. And he was just a congressman. If Nixon would come over there today, I think everybody'd leave town. (Laugh) Everybody'd pull out.

SAM: Today they sure would.

EU: And so... But that's the difference, by gosh, you know, he was just a congressman, but boy, he come out there, you know, and everybody... Why he was royalty, you know. Everybody just admired him, you know. Oh boy, if a congressman come out here in this country today, there wouldn't probably be anybody who'd turn off the road to go see him. That's the difference in the way government is today.

SAM: Did they listen to what he said?

EU: Oh yes.

SAM: Do you remember what he said?

EU: I forget now what he said. He was just another human being. He wasn't a superman or nothing.

SAM: Well, I wonder if he talked about politics, or if he just talked about what a nice country it was out here?

EU: Oh he mostly talked about himself, and where he went to school here, and different people he knew here. Yeah he just talked rattlin' along, you know, but he was a local boy who made good. And that was awful unusual to have a punk you know go from this neck of the woods back to Washington D. C., you know, that was really out of this world. Pret' near all people used to run the government was Eastern

people them days. Of course they always had their representative from Idaho and Washington all right, but I don't know. But it's just odd, the way he come out of here by then, and people... The town of Troy was just louded up with people. They were just walking on one another's feet around there. He had a stand built out there and he got up and made a speech. I bet there was five thousand people around there.

SAM: Gee.

EU: Oh it must have been that many if not more. Yeh he... Old log school house over here at Princeton. Well, there's no school there at all now, they tore everything down, but originally I started school myself in that little old log school house. It was just a little one room school.

SAM: That's where you went to school?

EU: That's where I started. I went my first year in that log house. But they was building the other schoolhouse, a frame building. They was building it, but they had the first two or three grades I think in school in that little log house. I remember my first teacher was named Miss McCann. That was quite a day, that first day of school.

SAM: What happened the first day of school?

EU: Oh-h-ho. They had the main building built, and they was holding school in the new school they'd built there, and they was holding school in it. But had a professor by the name of Oakley Hall, Oaky Hall. He lived in Moscow. He died a few years ago. But he was a professor in the upper grades. So I don't know if you remember them old desks. They had the iron frame down, and they had a hole about that

big around, right in them down so far from the floor. Do you remember them?

SAM: I think I've seen 'em.

EU: (Chuckles) Well, I didn't have nothing to do. So I sat there and kept my foot working in that hole, 'til I finally got my whole foot through it. Well I couldn't get it out.

SAM: No kidding.

EU: The schoolmarm, she come and she twisted this way with my foot, and by gosh, she couldn't get my foot out of there. So finally she had to go get the old professor, Old Hall, to come out. Boy, he was mad, the first day of school, you know. He was busy in there, and he came a-strompin' in there, and he grabbed my foot, and he twisted this way and it wouldn't go, and finally he had to take my shoe off to get my foot out. I tell you I was just scared plum to death. I thought that man looked ten feet tall.

SAM: Oh boy.

EU: He just scared me to death. If the devil came in there it wouldn't have scared me any worse. (Laughs) So that was my first day at school in that little log house over there.

SAM: Oh man, that must have made a lasting impression.

EU: Oh, it did, I'll never forget that. Yeah... Oh, I don't know. Yeah, I don't know. There's a lot of things happened around here, I guess. A lot of things went on around here in the early days people won't believe nowadays. You know, you start telling things that happened, and they look at you like, oh hell, you're way out yonder, you know. Well, for instance, one winter we had four feet of snow on the

level all over the valley here. More than that up in the woods, but four feet of level, the fences all covered over. Well then it rained, got quite a shower, and then that night it turned loose and froze. Oh, it froze a crust that thick on top of that four foot of snow. Well, they used to log. I don't know, you remember, you've seen them old, big logging bobsleds, big what-they-call logging bunks? Well they'd pile them up just like logs on an end, just like they do these short trip logs, hauling sixteen foot logs, you know. They'd pile them up there, and they'd put four and six horses ahead of it and haul 'em down here to the river, and they'd dump them over here at the river; roll 'em over the bank if they could, as close to the bank as they could get, all up and down the river. Decked the logs over there. Every man had his certain spot to put a log. Of course you had your logs branded. You know how they brand logs? Well they got...

SAM: With an iron?

EU: Huh?

SAM: With an iron?

EU: No, it's not an iron, it's a sledge hammer. And maybe your number would be O, or it could be E, C, anything, but there'd be a C at the end of that hammer. And you'd go along and hit the end of the log with that hammer and imprint that number there. Well, that'd be your number. So when they went down the scale down at the mill, you'd get credit for your log. And so like I say, they was hauling them all up and down the river. But they had the main road running right

here below the barn, just below this barn of mine, and went across that flat meadow place there, and they headed straight for the river. But when that snow come and got that deep and froze, they probably had six head of horses on them sleds, 'cause they wanted to land the logs way down yonder some place. The road was over here, and they'd just swing them horses up on top of all that snow and load a sled load of logs'd go right up on top of it. And they'd go over there on top of four feet of snow with a sled load of logs. Six horses on it and never break through. That's kind of hard to believe, but they sure did it. And ah...

SAM: Well how was it different with all the ice? Just 'cause the ice cover they could...

EU: How's that?

SAM: Just 'cause of the ice cover they could?

EU: A crust of snow on it. You've seen a crust of snow.

SAM: Oh yeah.

EU: Well, that's all it was. It just come a 'raining on top of all that snow, and it turned cold and froze. And that froze so hard that, by gosh, that them horses and things'd go right on top of the snow, right over the top of the fences and everything. Yup. Don't get winters like that no more. Haven't had a winter, I don't know, since... We used to... The country's all changed. Every winter they'd log up here, and summer they'd deck the logs up here. Hundred thousands of feet of logs would be decked up. You know what a deck of logs is?

SAM: Oh yeh.

EU: Well, they'd be decked along the road. There'd be a big deck here and there. And they'd deck'em all up in the summer time, and then they'd wait for the snow to come, and then they'd haul them to the river. Then in spring when high water come, they'd roll them in the river, and they could head off for Potlatch. That's the way they got the logs down at the mill, floated'em down the river. And so that was a great time. People'd get...

ANNA UTT: (Whispers) Want a cup of coffee?

SAM: Sure. Thank you.

EU: Yeh, and that's the way they got the logs down to the mill. Oh no, I've seen them go up here, by gosh, and fall big trees on that crust. And they'd have to dig down around the stump in order to leave your stump so high, you know. They'd dig down around it and then saw the tree down, and it would fall over on that crust of snow. I know my dad did up here, in the field up on this upper place up there. Fall a big old pine trees down, you know, and of course, when they fell they'd crush the snow. But they'd get down and cut the limbs off as much as they could, except the bottom ones, and put a chain around it, and put the horses out on top of the snow out there; and it'd roll that log out of the bed it fell in out on top of the snow. Of course my dad hauled them off with what they call a go-devil, just a two runner rig. Just two runners with a bunk across it, usually just had a hole about so long there, about five or six feet long between the runners. And then a chain would run through that business so that the runners could flex, and go around a

curve; why, one runner'd take it ahead of the other one, and see-saw. Devils they called them, go-devils. They was a devil.

SAM: Were would the guy... would he just go... Where would he be on that?

EU: 'He'd sit up on top of the log and drive his horses. In the wintertime when the logs was wet, they had a...

SAM: He'd sit right on the logs?

EU: Huh?

SAM: He'd sit right on the logs?

EU: Well, no. There was usually in the winter or bad weather, well, they always had, what, a gunny sack full of straw. They called them dry asses. (Laughs) And they'd put that on it and sit on it, you know.

SAM: Oh.

EU: And, that's what they'd call 'em, the name of that damn sack was a dry ass. Kept 'em from getting wet. So, oh no, but they used to... they never failed... I never seen them fail to get all their logs in during the winter. Well, nowadays, you know, if you'd decked logs that way for snow to come, why you never would get them in, you know. You probably wouldn't get enough snow to get maybe one or two trips, and the snow's gone. We haven't had any snow here to sleigh ride on for years. Maybe a day or two we'd get. I've seen ten inches, twelve inches, couple of days it's gone. That's all there was to amount to anymore.

SAM: Did they used to work all winter?

EU: Well they'd haul logs all winter. They'd work all summer

getting them decked up, up in them hills. And in the winter-time, why they'd wait for the snow to come, and then they'd start hauling logs and dumping them in the river. I guess some places the snow wasn't too deep they'd log in the winter-time. But they usually figured on just cutting them in the summertime, and decking them, and then hauling them in the winter. And they never failed to get them in. They always had enough snow to get them all in.

SAM: Did the mill run all year round?

EU: Oh yeh, yeh.

SAM: They had plenty to keep 'em going?

EU: Oh yeh, well of course they got to building a railroad further up. They built the railroad to Potlatch from Palouse to start with, and that's when all this country was logged off, by just hauling to the river and then floating them down the river. That's the way this country around here was all logged off. Well, then they built the railroad on up to Bovill. And, well they went to Harvard first. Then they went from Harvard on up the line to Bovill, with the railroad. And then of course they got to logging, hauling them in on the railroad. And then they got the railroad in, they always loaded them on the railroad to haul 'em now.

SAM: You mean they stopped, they used that instead of the river?

EU: Huh?

SAM: Instead of the river?

EU: Well, yeh, they done a lot of logging down here. There used to be a railroad run, you know this road you go up on here, from Princeton out? Well, that was the old railroad bed. They had a spur running up here, run clear

up the creek, and then it'd go up the different canyons. Oh yeh, they used to run trains right up through those canyons here. Yah, shays they call 'em. Wasn't a real... What they call a shay. You know what a shay engine is? Well, it's... they're not very big, but they're powerful. They'll go right up hill, yeh they go right up them canyons. They've got maybe five or six, six seven drivers on each side, and they got a rod runs through. And the engine runs this rod and the rod's got worm gears in 'em. And a worm gear on every wheel. Every wheel on the track is a drive wheel.

SAM: I see.

EU: Something like a malley. You know o'malleys?

SAM: No, I never...

EU: They're the same thing. Oh yeh, them o'malleys, they used to use them to go over the Rocky Mountains. That's what they... Well, they was using them o'malleys back ther in '36. I know I was coming down through Wyoming, coming down off the, what they call the path going across there, the... oh what is they call that path going across the Rockies, goes through Laramie and up through there. You can go over the Rockies and not know you're going uphill, not going over a mountain. You ever been through that neck of the highway?

SAM: No.

EU: Well you go from Ogden, Utah, and you go up to Evanston, Wyoming, and then all the way through Wyoming. You're going over the Rocky Mountains. But you can see for miles either way, that you can't see a mountain. But you get up to

Laramie, why you're something like seven thousand some feet high. I know I always have to ask damn fool questions, but I got into Rawlins, Wyoming and stopped to get gas. So I told that guy, "By gosh, they told me when I left Utah this morning that I'd drive over the Rockies." I says, "Where the hell are they? I've been driving all day and I haven't seen a mountain yet." "Man," he says, "you're right on top of it." (Laughs). Great Divide they call it. Great Divide, going across the Rockies. Yes, I drove all day and I haven't seen a mountain yet. And he said, "Man you're right on top of 'em," And they was something like 7,000 feet up.

SAM: Well, here you got no trouble, you know when you see it, at least it's a either a hill or a mountain, but you see it, and you know it's there.

EU: Yeh, you can see mountains way off in the distance. Up there you know you could be going along, there's only about three or four towns through Wyoming. There's Evanston, and I think the next one was Green River, and I forget the next, then you come to Rawlins, then Laramie--over a hundred miles between towns. She's right out in the, desolate. We went through in the wintertime when I went through there, and you could see a train way off, you know, over across the prairie there. The Union Pacific runs through there. But you'd be going on the highway, and way off a real train looked just like a little toy train. You could see so far, and you could see that train just as plain, but it was little. It was just high altitude, I guess. The air's clear.

SAM: Did people from around here travel much in the early days?

EU: There's some of them... But there're lot of them, ninety per cent of the travelling was about as far as Spokane and back. There's a few people get out and travel around. I've done a little travel. I've been in California, back in Kansas, Oklahoma, Colorado. I've been all through there, and Montana. A lot of people of course travel a lot more than that. But a lot of them, by gosh, haven't been any further than Spokane that went away from the country, either. 'Bout like, when I was a kid, there was kind of a backward family named Knox. Knox was up here. Two boys, one was Herb and the other one Fred. They was grown men, but you could go up there in ordinary time—I don't know if they ever had any shoes or not--but they was always running around there barefooted, you know. So one day they was downtown, they all dressed up and had shoes on and everything. By gosh, I wanted to know where they was goin' all dressed up like that. By gosh we're going to Spokane to see them high buildings. ^(chuckling) I don't think they had a building in Spokane over six stories high. They was gonna see them tall buildings up there. They was gonna see the world. Yeh, they was going to Spokane to see the world.

SAM: What happened to that family? Did they stick around?

EU: Oh no there's none of them around here now. No, the only one I know of now that living, I guess he's still living, ^{I don't know, but he was living} in Lewiston, the last I heard of him.

SAM: They just poor?

EU: Oh everybody was poor.

SAM: They were no poorer?

EU: Well, I guess. Anybody had a thousand dollars them days was a millionaire. So I don't know how poor you'd have to get, you know, to be considered poor.

SAM: But most kids wore shoes though.

EU: Oh yeh, well I guess they could... I don't what was the idea. But they was the healthiest kids around the country. Boy, cripes. Yeh, they was healthy.

SAM: I guess every^{body} was poor then.

EU: Oh, yeh. Oh, there was some guys maybe had a little ^{bit} more than somebody else did, but then... Oh they always had their big shots around the country. Some guy got a couple dollars more than the other guy, why he... The other guy had to bow to him. They run the country around here. So, I don't know.

SAM: Tell me what you were telling me about Laird again, 'cause that reminds ^{me} of Laird.

EU: The what?

SAM: When you ran into Laird.

EU: Who, Laird?

SAM: Yeah.

EU: (Chuckles.) Oh, I was over here in Princeton. Oh, he had a chauffeur. He had his private chauffeur, fellow by the name of Floyd--not Floyd but Albert Oots. And he had his uniform on, you know, and he was a regular chauffeur, and all he had, all his job was, was keep his car clean and gassed up, and just a regular chauffeur's job. When the boss wanted to go to Bovill, well he'd drive him. He had a big Hudson Super Six. It was a big car. And so by gosh,

he'd go up the road and that chauffeur'd hold the road, you know. The road was just two lanes, you know. You'd have to find a place to turn out, you know. You couldn't just go by one another at sixty mile an hour like you do now, you had to look for a place to turn out and let the car go by you. Well by gosh, he'd just hold the road and put everybody out in the ditch or anything else, where you had to get to get to keep from gettin' run over. Well, I was just a dumb kid. My dad had an old Velie car. It was new, wasn't old. It was an old make, a Velie. You ever heard of them? Velie, V-e-l-i-e, Velie. So, I remember there used to be a blue hall right there just as you hit the highway. You cross the railroad tracks--I think they got an ice plant there now, where they freeze meat--and then you hit the road and go right down through town. Well the road was wide, it was wide as the street was. There was plenty of room, but there's actually just one road right down through town.

Well, I turned that corner with the old Velie, and I was way down there at the other end of town and I seen a car just throwing dust out to beat the devil. I knew that old Hudson. I made up my mind I wasn't gonna give him the whole road, I'd give him half of it. So I put the two front wheels in one track and he was coming right up the middle. And I just throwed that old Velie wide open. Right down there I met him, right down there, you know where the post office is there in Princeton? There used to be a slough right there, just across from the post office, between that and the railroad track there used to be a slough, and it was full of water all summer long, and I used to skate on it when I was

a kid in the wintertime. Anyway, I held my road on him, and he got right up there, I don't know, but all at once he seen he gonna have to give. Playin' chicken I guess you call it nowadays. Well he give, and he wound up over in that slough. He didn't upset or nothin', but he just plowed out there in that slough and was stuck out there and I kept agoin'. And I didn't even know how it happened until after I come back, somebody told me Old Laird wound up out in that slough. Well they had to get a team of horses I guess to pull him out of it. And he canned his chauffeur right there. After that he drove all the time, he drove himself. Yah, I sure broke that chauffeur from suckin' eggs, though. I could've got myself killed, too.

SAM: Did he ever knew that you did it?

EU: No, I don't know. Why, if he did, I never found out. I never sure as hell told him. 'Cause I worked down at the mill, he was superintendent down here at the mill, you know. No, I never told him...Yup.

SAM: Well, it's funny. Its funny that the guy would do that, you know, just cause he's got the money.

EU: Well he was a big shot, you know. He'd walk down the streets of Potlatch and, you know he wouldn't even see you, wouldn't even look, speak or nothin'. No, everybody was supposed to... Why, it'd been an crime to say "Hello Mr. Laird," I guess. It've been an insult, oh boy. But he mellowed out though before he died. He got so he wasn't quite so...

And they used to have dances down in the old gymnasium down there. And oh the doctors and dentists and all the bosses around the mill they'd... Their wives, they'd all

dress up, and they'd have what they call a ball, you know. And they had a veranda up above where the common people'd go. They'd go up there and you could look down on the floor and watch them dance. But you wouldn't dare to go down and get on the floor with them. Hell, you wasn't allowed down there. You was just common people. Anyway, they kept that up till... I was down there, I was up on the damn veranda with a bunch of them up there, and somebody got ahold of them damn stink bombs. And they throwed them down on the floor. Well, you know what a stink bomb is? Well, anyway--broke up the dance. So anyway, I guess the high muck-a-mucks kinda got the message. And they never had a one of them balls after that. That was the end of that. That put a stop to that ball business.

SAM: Did they try to find out who did that?

EU: Oh I guess old Laird, if he could've found out who'd done that, he'd have skelped him. Nobody knew nothin'.

SAM: Nobody knew.

EU: Oh that's like one time here, oh about twenty years ago. You know where Hampton is up there? Well, the railroad track comes up, and they had, oh a damn little culvert for the water to go through, you know, from up above on the other side, where the water and everything comin' from Gold Hill down had to go under the railroad track. Well they just had a little culvert there that wouldn't carry the water. So every high water we'd have, why that whole flat there between Princeton and Hampton was just a lake. And, by gosh, you know, everytime. So they tried to get Potlatch

to build a bigger culvert down there and let that water go through. Well, they argued it wasn't the culvert's fault, it was the river coming up and pushing the water back. Well, it sounds a little bit logical, but... So one day, anyway, a bunch of guys, I don't know who it was. They got down there one day and they put a bunch of dynamite in that culvert and they just blowed that damn thing all to heck. And they notified the company, 'cause they always run the logger up there early the next morning. So they called in down at the railroad yard down there and told them that the culvert was out up there. So they brought the engine up the next morning and a couple of guys walked ahead of the engine, 'til they... They come up before daylight, you know. They had their flashlight, and they was walking up there, and they finally come to it. And oh boy, old... what the heck was the guy, head of the railroad business down there, I can't think of his name. But he was up in Princeton inquiring around who done it, you know, nobody, everybody. Well at first everybody said "I did," everybody he asked said "I did it." Well, Christ, you know, the whole town said, "I did it." Well I don't know who did do it. ^{I never heard.} I never did hear who'd do it. I think I know who done it. Funny part of it is, Floyd Layton lived on that hill there, that big square house up there. It's on his place where the culvert was. And he was aggravated because he had a place for his cows to run down there, you know, and it was ^{all} flooded all the time in high water. So anyway he was awful nervous, 'cause it looked like if there was any guy would do it, why,

it'd

^ be him. But I don't think he had anything to do with it.

But he was pretty nervous about it. But anyway, by gosh, they was up there and they built a culvert now that carries the water, and we haven't had any high water over the road since. So it was the culvert that was doing it. Oh they got one down there now that'd carry the Pacific River through there.

SAM: I guess they didn't want any more trouble.

EU: I guess not. So anyway... Oh we had a lot of excitement around here in different times. Yup, ^{ok} Potlatch, you know, they was just like the United States was in the world, you know. They could do anything they pleased. Just like old Nixon, and nobody could do anything about it 'cause they had all the big lawyers, you know. You couldn't sue 'em. If they'd done damage, why you couldn't sue 'em, 'cause they had their own lawyers and everything, and they'd push their weight around pretty strong. 'Bout like the United States has been doin' to the rest of the world. Any country that don't do what the United States says, they send the marines down there and shoot the hell out of them.

SAM: That's right.

EU: ~~Well~~, we've kind of come to the end of the road on that too.

SAM: I hope so.

EU: Well we ain't, by gosh, we don't dare to. Just like that Panama business they had down here ~~they had~~ awhile back, you know. Heck, if that've been ten years, twelve years ago, they'd ^{ve} sent a bunch of marines down there and kicked the hell out of them Panamanians, you know, teach

'em a lesson. They didn't do her this time.

SAM: Well, maybe we're starting to learn.

EU: Maybe we're gonna grow up.

SAM: Maybe we're growing.

EU: Yeh, we're just, yeh, maybe we're... Oh, I don't know.

Nixon going to China. Here five, oh, eight, six, seven years ago at the most, why the communists was dirty sons of bi's... Everything you could hear was a dirty communist, you know. Communists was the cause of all the troubles in the world. And, ah... Well, I told my wife, one of these days it was going to turn out this way.

We used to live up there on the river up above Princeton up there, a place there. Used to be an old wagon road runs through the brush going up to the other place, a kind of short cut through there. We had a little dog named Watch, I called him. We named him Watch. He was about two-thirds grown, pup yet. That dog run along side of the wagon. And coyote come down over the hill. And of course the dog looked up and seen that coyote; so, oh boy, take after the coyote. An' the coyote broke and run up the hill. And the dog run him up there aways, and we was ridin' along in the old wagon there, watching it. So the pup run him up aways and come back, and pretty quick the coyote come a little bit closer to the wagon. Pup took after him again. Coyote went a little further. Dog went further. So then the dog come back to the wagon. Coyote was back there. Oh heck, he wasn't oh twice as far from here to this television from the wagon, you know. And oh the dog took

after him and the coyote broke out and run like the devil. And that time the coyote, the dog chased his foot up the hill, but the coyote circled around and come back between the dog and the wagon. (Chuckles.) And so it was the funniest thing on that, you could see us talk about the expression on anything. They tell you about an animal ain't got much expression, but they have. That pup looked up and he saw that coyote between him and the wagon, and so he didn't know what to do. Pretty quick he got down on his belly, and he started crawlin' for the coyote to make up. (Laughs.) Gonna make up with that coyote. That old coyote, you know, you could see how he outfoxed that dog. Had his tongue out and just laughed. So anyway, we had to stop the wagon and put a stop to that circus.

That's the way old Nixon done, by gosh. He had to go to China, and ah, the whole thing, if you can't whip'em, join 'em. So he went to Russia. And the communists, you don't hear much about it anymore, do yuh. No. Fact of the matter, Nixon says they're wonderful people. They're not dirty communists anymore, they're wonderful people. So, that's the way that dog was, when they got you where you can't go nowhere, then they're ready to make up.

SAM: I really agree with your description. I think that's the way it is.

EU: I said that'd happen. By gosh, the United States is going to push their weight around and one of these days they're going to have to do just like that dog. They're going to get themselves boxed in until that's what we're gonna do,

and so it happened. Yeh, it happened.

SAM: Well you think Potlatch is gonna get that ^{way} too? Have they already?

EU: Well, they're on the end of the rope. They're going to put a little cedar mill in, but that's just a matter of time, and there won't be no mill down here. Yeah, this is all washed up. And unless they get some kind of industry that they can... I don't know what it would be, with the lumber on the line, I don't know. It's pretty well all logged off around here.

SAM: Do you think that's the real reason why Potlatch is closing down, because all the lumber's really gone? Or do you think it's just that they want to make, they're not making enough money?

EU: About half and half. This mill was losing money. It wasn't making money that they was making out of other mills. And it was kind of of a... Oh, just like a man's got several farms around. And he got one, by gosh, that ain't producing, he'll peddle it. Same thing. They wanted to peddle this mill and kind of get out of it. It wasn't making money like some of the rest of them, so they wanted to phase it out. Yeh, I think that was it.

SAM: But how many people depend on that for their living?

EU: About 250, I think, men working down at the mill, 'til they... Well, now, and then 'til June 1, then it shuts down, you know, and then they're going to remodel the mill over down there, just... I don't exactly know what they're going to do, make dimension stuff, the way I understand it, two-by-fours and two-by-sixes. They're going to put in a bunch of resaws.

So anyway, they're laying off 140 men the way I understand it. And course a lot of them's already got different jobs. I know my son, he was working down there, and he was one was gonna be laid off. So he went over to Garfield and that Love outfit over ther^e. He's over there now. They're a machine ~~shop~~ outfit. Oh, I don't know. Things change.

Oh, no, we're gettin' short of timber, that's no joke. No they're bound to. Why, they've hauled, this mill, they've hauled... I don't know, I've met Potlatch trucks way up the other side of Clarkia, way back ther^e. Have you ever been in that country? The high country they call it?

SAM: Yeah, I've been up the St. Joe and up near the North Fork of the Clearwater some.

EU: Yeah. You never been to Clarkia?

SAM: Yeah, I've been there.

EU: Back in behind there, oh I don't know, Glover Creek down in through there, and go clear back to Boll's Cabins. That's all big country back there.. Well, that's pretty near all logged off, last time I was up there. And that's not far from the Montana line, when you get back in ther^e. They just been pret' near haulin' logs from the Montana line clear down here to this mill in order to get logs. So you see, when they get that far back for logs, why its gettin' pretty scarce. Especially when I was a kid, you could start right out here and about the end of civilization. Just big pine trees, big trees, firs and everything all the way clear to Bovill. Used to go through forest all the way up thru there. You wouldn't believe it. But just what they call forest roads,

you know. There was big timber all ^{the} way along the road, all ^{way} the clear to Bovill. Then on up to Elk River, same way. Now there's no timber up thru there. You can go up through there now, and you can't see a tree, by gosh, a mule couldn't pull out. Just logged off. So there's no question about it, they're short of logs. And it's a question... The government stopped it. They curtailed it down. Giving these mills all the logs they wanted all the time, ^{why...} Lot of guys are mad, 'cause they thought, the logs would run for at least ten years yet, well it's supposed to. Let 'em log it all off, and then what have you got? It's only a matter of time they're gonna have to shut down anyway. When they saw the last tree down like they did the buffalo, why... You're out of buffaloes or you're out of logs, that's all there is to it. So I think the government is wise in doing what they did, curtail^{ing} it back. Oh, we got enough timber to keep this country going, but I don't know whether they can just keep a sending boatload and boatload of lumber to Japan and all over the world like we've been doing all these times. If we'd been like China, utilizing our raw materials just for our own use, why we'd've had everything we needed for thousands of years, but...

SAM: Well, do you think they would have been better off if they'd regulated the timber cutting a long time ago? Would ~~it~~ have saved the timber?

EU: Why, you go over in Germany, and they got the Black Forest over there. They got practically as much timber left, by gosh, as we have. And look at the difference when ya started there. They cut a tree down, they have to plant two. This

has been goin' on for thousands of years that way, they still got their forests. They didn't go in and just slaughter it like we did. Just mutilate the forest, leave it in... No, Germans come over here and see the way we logged this land off and the shape we left it in, they'd scream to high heaven.

SAM: What did people think about it back in the early days when...

EU: They thought they'd have timber forever. Why, there was so much timber here, they wasn't enough saws to saw it all down in a thousand years. Yeah, that's really, they thought there was no end to timber.

SAM: Did you think that way yourself?

EU: Yeah, I think so. Guys go out, by gosh, would saw good trees down, and there wasn't no mills around they could haul logs to. They'd just get 'em pushed up on a pile and set fire to them just in order to get a few acres to farm, just destroy the timber just to get a few acres to farm. That's no foolin'. Yeh, just timber didn't mean nothin'. Lots of timber. Yeh. Oh yeah, a lot of the land was cleared around here, by gosh, that was just hauled off and piled and burnt, just to get it off the land so they could farm it...Yeh. So...

Oh, I don't know, gold's comin' back in now, gettin' to be quite an item again. There's a lot of gold in that hill over~~h~~ere, what they call Gold Hill. There's a lot of gold there if somebody could find it. There's bound to be, bound to be a lot of gold. Them creeks, heck you can find color in all them creeks. One woman lived up there on Meadow Creek, well, the Palouse River too. Used to run a bunch of chickens there, you know, these barnyard chickens? And ever once in

awhile she'd kill a chicken and gets a couple a nuggets of gold out of the goldarn crow, no foolin'. Yeh. But you go out there, ~~you know~~ they don't know where the gold come from. The mother lode is someplace, up there someplace, but they never found it. So all you can do is just placer mine, you know. You can go up the creeks and get a few nuggets out of there, you know. The same as those chickens. They go up there and scratch around in the rocks, and they find a bright piêce of gold, they eat it. (Chuckles.) Nobody ever got rich on it. Not yet. If they get a big outfit in there so they can just tunnel right through that mountain, you know, they'd find gold. Oh I think what happened, you see there's two hills, they got the East Gold Hill and West Gold Hill, I think they call it. There's a saddle in between them. I think they was one big mountain at one time, and she blowed up. And I think that's the reason them gold is all scattered all over the creeks up there, scattered all over. I think it just blowed out. Otherwise how did that gold get clear down there in them meadows down there, up above Harvard, there.

SAM: It was right in the meadows, huh?

EU: Oh yes, well...

SAM: You didn't have to...

EU: No, it was down next to the Palouse River. The fact of the matter, there's a lot of gold, I think right in that Palouse River. But anyway that gold scattered, and there's a lot of gold there someplace nobody's ever found. There's been guys dug holes in the mountain up there, and mined, but

most of it they'd get a hole back in there, and get a few little nuggets someplace, and go around and sell stock in that mine. (Chuckles.) ^{SAM:} ^ They sell stock around here or ^{EU:} Spokane...? ^ Oh yeah, there's a guy up here by the name of Pinnell. Oh you go, let's see, you go... oh yeah, you go up above Harvard, and I can't think of the name of the creek you go up, but you go up there, and you go up on the side of Gold Hill. He had a mine up there. He sold a lot of stock in that mine. A lot of guys put a lot of money in that goldamn mine, but it never did amount to anything. They all lost their money. Old Pinnell was the only one that made any money out of it. He sold stock and took the money and got the heck out of the country.

SAM: He never worked it after he sold the stock?

EU: Well not much, since he... I don't think he done much work. He had a crew up there workin', diggin' a hole back in, then he went sellin' the stock in it. But he had gold to show you, but I kind of found out that gold didn't come out of Gold Hill. He had some gold, by gosh, that was from Nevada and Oregon. He'd show you gold, by gosh, and ^{Oh,} a lot of guys suckered on it. I didn't. He tried to get me, but he didn't make it.

SAM: How much would he get from a person? How much would...

EU: Well, it depended on how much stocks you'd buy.

SAM: How much they wanted, huh?

EU: Yeh, he'd sell you all the stocks you wanted. But I don't know what it was a share now, something like five dollars a share or somethin', and you buy so many shares. No, the

old guy who used to ~~own~~ this place right here above this house above me here, Wasson, old George Wasson, by gosh it about broke him up in business. He was just so sure he was gonna to get rich in that, you know, he just about broke himself up in business, buying stock in it... Gold's getting now where they're gonna start mining gold now, and I hope they get around to where you can even ~~buy~~ some gold. Did you ever have your hand on a twenty dollar gold piece? Never did, uh?

SAM: I had a little, couple little pieces of gold from the creeks in my hands, but nothing but...

EU: Oh, it used to be, I was down in Oregon, oh it was back in about twenty-four I was down there, I guess it was. Why heck you can take your paycheck in and cash it every weekend, and by gosh you'd probably get maybe two twenty dollar gold pieces. Ten dollar gold pieces about the size of a dime. Yeah, I used to have twenty dollar gold piece in my pocket, dime, ten dollars, five dollars, five dollar gold pieces. They was just like any other money, they just slipped through your fingers.

SAM: Well I'll bet if people could have gotten ahold of that guy, they would have given him a pretty hard time.

EU: Well, you couldn't really prove nothin'. No, he had a mine, and it was all legitimate. Couldn't prove nothing against him. And what the hell if you did? He didn't really have anything you could sue him for. I don't think there's any comebackance. Just like all of them other mining ventures, just like old Barnum and Bailey says, "There's a sucker in every daggone one," What did he used to say? I forget how

he quoted it but.. What ~~did~~ old Barnum say on that? What was his saying?

SAM: I don't remember, but I know just what you mean.

EU: "There's a sucker born every minute."

SAM: That's it.

EU: That's it, "There's a sucker born every minute." By gosh. No, you get stuck on... I got stuck on a mine, (laughs) hundred dollars worth. Had a mica mine up here by Avon. Oh it was real mica. Heck they had a hole dug in there, and you could get big chunks of mica that thick, you know. Why, it looked like a surefire thing. So I stuck a hundred dollars in that. A lot of guys did, I wasn't the only one. But the darn outfit, they sold stock in it, and they just kind of folded up, and that was the end of it. Oh they threatened a suit, but he never done anything about it, I don't know. Another company took it over and went over it, and processed a bunch of mica out of it. Then mica got so it didn't have no price on it anymore. They come out with manufactured stuff. About all they used it for was like insulators. Mica's a good insalator in electrical appliances.

SAM: They replaced that?

EU: I think they got a replacement for it now, some kind of damn stuff they build. Anyway mica just didn't have no value.

SAM: Was this guy a local that had the mine?

EU: No, I don't know where he come from.

SAM: Was the mine up near Mica Mountain?

EU: No, do you know where Deary is?

SAM: Yup.

EU: That mountain they call Spud Hill?

SAM: Yup.

EU: It's right on back of that. You kind of go in north of Deary, and you go in the back part of the mine. That's where the Mica Mine was, right up there on Spud Hill. Yeah, that's where they was. Oh, it looked good. It was all right... I don't know. Anybody that hasn't got stuck by yellow mine stock, he hasn't been very much of an oldtimer. I think everybody got stuck on it sometime. I know my dad got old stock, mining stock that's worthless. I don't know whether it's around here yet or not.

SAM: Yeah, most of the folks though, around here... When you were homesteading, you didn't mine too?

EU: No, no. No, there wasn't too much mining went on. My dad first started, that's the first thing he done when he come out here, was mine up on Gold Hill.

SAM: Oh yeah?

EU: Yeah, he, oh he was raised in Kansas, and couple of his friends come out here. And oh boy, they prospected a little on Gold Hill and they found a little gold, and they wrote back and wanted dad and their brother, there's three brothers. Two of them come out and one stayed back. So they gonna get rich out here on gold, so by gosh my dad and the other brother come back out here. And they had quite a system...

(End of Side A)

SAM: Tell me that again. They dug a flume?

EU: Well, what they call a flume. Yah, you see, the creek they

was up on didn't have much water running down, and they wanted a hydraulic mine. So they went around over here in another canyon way up above, and they started out there and just worked around the hill at a water level. Walked clear around that hill, someplace they come to a draw, they'd have to build a frame across it, a flume. Anyway, they built it all around clear over here to this canyon, and of course it had a pretty good pressure. Well, they got everything all rigged up and started hydraulic mining. Heck, they'd just haul that old hose out there and just knocked the sap right out of them hillsides, you know. But, they didn't look far enough ahead. An old guy was farming down below there, name of Jim Cochrane. And the water come, that creek come down across his meadow there, oh probably a couple of acres or better. So by gosh he had a big damage suit against them, and they was all broke, of course. They didn't have no money, and so my gosh they had a damage suit or else quit mining, one or the other, so they had to give everything up, and pull out. After all that work. After all that work there was nothing they could do. Give up. Oh, I was up there a few years back, up through there, and you could still see up the timber where they had that place dug around there.

SAM: Huh.

EU: Let's see, I can't think of the name of the creek. The name of the creek they had the mine was on Garden Gulch. But the one over here, bigger canyon, had plenty of water running down it. But anyway they went over here and they

went clear around the mountain, clear around the hill and back into this other canyon. Built that flume clear around there. And they had a goin' thing for 'em, but (chuckles) they ~~should~~ have seen old Jim Cochrane before they started that. Yep. So that put a stop to their mining business.

SAM: So, then he decided to stay here and farm?

EU: Oh yeh. Well, they all went over to a town over here on the Clearwater named Peck. You know where Peck is over there?

SAM: Yep.

EU: Well they got up on the ridge up there and they... I don't know whether they took out homesteads or what. My dad didn't take out one, but he worked over there and lived over there for awhile until he bought a place over here, and that was about 1903.. He moved back over here on the farm and started farming, raising cattle. That's what he done. And the other friends of his, they still stayed over at Peck.

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